



## **Superior Court of California County of Riverside**

4050 Main Street, Riverside, CA 92501

### **MEDIA ADVISORY**

May 14, 2015

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(electronic version available at:

<http://riverside.courts.ca.gov/media/media.shtml>

### **RIVERSIDE COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT ANNOUNCES FOURTH ANNUAL VETERANS' COURT GRADUATION - MAY 22, 2015**

#### **RIVERSIDE COUNTY:**

The Riverside County Superior Court is pleased to announce that the Riverside Veterans' Court, presided over by Judge Mark Johnson, will celebrate its fourth graduating class on Friday, May 22, 2015 at 4:00 p.m. in Department 1 of the Historic Courthouse located at 4050 Main Street, Riverside, California.

The Riverside Veterans' Court is a collaborative effort between the court and other agencies such as the District Attorney, Public Defender, Probation Department, Department of Mental Health and the Veterans' Administration (VA). This unique collaboration was implemented in January 2012 and focuses on a treatment-based alternative to incarceration for veterans in the community charged with committing crimes linked to issues such as traumatic brain injury, post-traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse, or mental health issues resulting from his or her service in the U.S. armed forces. The program is authorized pursuant to Penal Code Section 1170.9, which requires a nexus between the issues that have caused the veteran to intersect with the criminal justice system and their military service.

Each of the 16 graduating veterans in attendance have successfully completed a minimum 18-month intensive treatment program (or a 12-month program for veterans convicted of specified misdemeanors) that includes regular drug and alcohol testing, weekly individual and group counseling, mental health services, self-help meetings, as well as support from veterans and Veterans' Court partners in the community including Judge Johnson, himself a decorated combat veteran. Ongoing aftercare services are available to all graduates to ensure continued success.

Featured speakers will include Assemblywoman Melissa Melendez, representing the 67<sup>th</sup> District of the California State Assembly and Supervisor John J. Benoit, representing the 4<sup>th</sup> District of Riverside County. Congressman Mark Takano, representing the 41<sup>st</sup> Congressional District of the U.S. House of Representatives will be an honored guest.

"This Court recognizes the profound and courageous service of the veterans. I am proud to serve as the Judge in this Court," said Riverside County Superior Court Judge Mark Johnson, who presides over the Veteran's Court calendar.

Members of the press and public are invited to attend the graduation ceremony.

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